

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in this application. No amendment has been made in this Response.

(1) Claims 1-8 and 14-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yasuda et al (JP 2001-033984 in view of its English language translation).

(i) As disclosed in Yasuda et al. at claim 1, the 1st negative-mold resist pattern is formed, on which the organic film is formed, and then, the organic film and a part of the first negative resist pattern are removed. As disclosed in paragraph [0043], the organic film is heated to promote the diffusion into the 1st negative-mold resist pattern, for the purpose to partially solubilize the 1st negative-mold resist pattern into an exfoliation liquid. Thus, as discussed in the previous Response, the invention of Yasuda et al. is to reduce the size of the resist pattern by using the organic film, which is completely deferent from the thickening of the resist pattern as claimed.

(ii) In addition, “melamine as the crosslinking agent” mentioned in the Office Action is disclosed for the 1st negative-mold resist pattern in claim 1 of Yasuda. Please see paragraph [0036]. On the other hand, the “surfactant” mentioned by the Office Action is disclosed for the organic film. Please see paragraphs [0035] and [0048].

If the Examiner considers that the disclosed 1st negative-mold resist pattern material corresponds to the claimed material of the present invention, the Examiner tries to modify Yasuda et al. by incorporating the surfactant disclosed for the organic film into the 1st negative-mold resist pattern material. On the other hand, if the Examiner considers that the organic film material corresponds to the claimed material of the present invention, the Examiner tries to modify Yasuda et al. by incorporating the crosslinking agent disclosed for the 1st negative-mold resist pattern material into the organic film material. There is no motivation for such modifications.

(ii) Neither of the 1st negative-mold resist pattern material nor the organic film material corresponds to the claimed resist pattern thickening material of the present invention. In view of that, the disclosed organic film material cannot be modified to include a crosslinking agent, and also, the disclosed 1st negative-mold resist pattern material does not need to include the claimed surfactant in view of obtaining appropriate resist pattern thickening material of the present invention.

(2) Claims 9-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yasuda et al. in view of Sato et al.(U.S. Patent No. 5,955,241).

Further to the argument above, the chemical-amplification-type negative resist composition of Sato et al. does not have any surfactant. In addition, there is no suggestion or teaching the disclosed resist composition is able to thicken a formed resist pattern. Thus, the

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Examiner's asserted modification is baseless. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

(3) Claims 23-28 were found to be allowable.

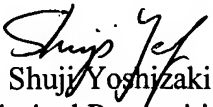
(4) In view of the above, claims 1-28 are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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